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# Few VVords

Concerning

## CONSCIENCE, WHAT IT IS;

And what Estate it was in before  
TRANSGRESSION.

And how it became Darkened, Defi-  
led and Corrupted;

And how again it may be Enlightened,  
Cleansed, Purified and set at Liberty, as  
it was before Sin entred.

Intermixt with a few Words concern-  
ing *Persecution* among the diverse Sects in  
*Christendom* (and upon the Face of all the  
Earth); shewing, that they all arise for Want  
of True Liberty of Conscience; and what  
that *Liberty* is.

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William Shewen. *W*

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Printed in the Year 1675.

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 Concerning  
**CONSCIENCE,**  
 What it is, &c.

**C**onscience is generally to be understood to be such a Being, Subject, Faculty or Capacity in Mankind, which is wanting in all the Beasts of the Field, Fish of the Sea, and Fowls of the Air; and in this Capacity Mankind differs from and excels them all; being created in and endued with such a Capacity, wherein and whereby he is enabled to participate of the Divine Nature, & to partake of the Beams of its Glory, to Meditate. Contemplate, Consolate, Delight and Refresh himself.

Which Capacity is as a Book, capable to contain what is written or imprinted therein; and may be not only opened and shut, but blotted and stained also.

(4)

self in the Light, Law and Glory of his Maker; which Capacity is not to be found in all the Elements of this World, but only in Mankind.

Now, in the Beginning Man's *Mind, Heart*

These Three are so inseparable, that that which defiles the One, defiles the Other; and that which purifies the One, purifies the Other. *and Conscience* was a Heavenly and pure Receptacle, Tabernacle and Dwelling place for the Almighty; his Power, Wisdom, Light and Glory was displayed

therein, and Mankind was highly exalted thereby, above all the Works of his hands. And while Mankind stood here in this

The Blessed Estate of Man before the Fall.

High and Heavenly Estate, he lived in the Paradise of God, enjoying the Light of his Countenance, and had Unity with his Maker, and could behold his Face with Joy, and receive the Reflections of the Beams of Divine Glory shining in his Conscience with Delight, living in Dominion over all the Creation; his Conscience being Pure, he held the Mystery of Faith in it, eying the Invisib'e God through, above and beyond all things, visible and invisible.

This was the State of Mankind before the Fall, while his Conscience was Pure and Undeiled ; while he remain'd in that Estate God made him and placed him in, who was a Pure, Innocent Subject, Holy in his Being, and Harmless in his Nature, all within him and without him was Good, yea, very Good. Now, the Wisdom is to understand, how that which was Holy and Harmless, Innocent, Pure and Undeiled, did become Evil and Corrupted, seeing in this State and Time Evil had not a Being, whence could or did the Temptations arise ? The Wisdom of all men living in the Fain Deiled Estate cannot find out nor search into the Depth of these things ; they are only revealed and made known by the shining of the same Light which was in the Beginning, and gives the Children thereof to see to the same : Therefore to the same Light and Spirit of God, which moved upon the Face of the Waters, in the Beginning, before the Sun, Moon and Stars were created, or the Mountains formed ; which Light now shineth in the Heart of Mankind. (though Darknes), which Light also God hath caused to shine out of Darknes in the Hearts of Thou-

The Mysteries of God are hid from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed to Babes.

ands in this our Day and Age ; I say, To this Light I chiefly refer and commend thee, being indeed the Key of the Mysteries of God and Godliness, yet a few Words for the sake of the Captivated, and for the opening of that Eye that's blinded, that such may come to see and discern the Things of God, and that the Enlightned may by seeing perceive how Mankind at first came to make Shipwrack of Faith and a Good Conscience, and avoid doing the like.

*Moses*, or the Author of *Genesis*, was endued with an Excellent Spirit of Wisdom and Discerning, when he comprized the History of the Creation, and the State of Mankind therein ; and indeed I must tell my Reader,

Nothing short of the Inspiration of the Almighty gives a True Understanding of the things of his Kingdom.

That nothing short of a Measure of the same Spirit and Divine Wisdom can lead thee into a True Discerning & Understanding of the same ; he hath exposed the Shell, but hath lockt up the Kernel from the Prudent Wit and Comprehension of Man under divers *Similitudes* and *Hieroglyphicks* ; thou mayest read the History, and walk in the Field of the Creation, yet if thou diggest not deep, and find the Pearl, and purchase it, and like a Wise Merchant Man sell All for it, thou wilt be ignorant of the Mystery

stery, and remain Poor, Blind and Miserable ; for I intend not to throw Pearls before Swine, neither dare I (like *Hezekiah*) shew the Treasures of the Lord's House to the *Babylonians*, lest both I and it are carried into Captivity therefore.

Now, its said, *They were both \* Naked, the Man and his wife, and were not ashamed* : There was then No Cause of Shame in being, no Temptation entred into, no Sin committed, which is the Cause of Shame. And its also said, *The Serpent was more subtil then all the Beasts of the Field which God had made* : Now God made nothing but what was Good, keeping in its State & Bounds, where in God had set and appointed them, would so have remained ; But there being a possibility to break those Bounds, and disobey that Law that God had set over them, God gave Mankind A Warning

\* Many Carnal Conceits and Imaginations are and have been at Work among Men to Understand these things, but they have not come to the Opening of the Seals, nor to the Key of the Mysteries of Gods, and so have divulged their own Carnal and Lucifrian Conceptions, Comprehensions, and Notions for the Divine Knowledge of God ; and many have thereby grown Rich, Tall and Great in Brain and Head-Knowledge ; but Poor, Low and Small in Experimental Heart Understanding, and of the Work of God therein.

thereof,

thereof, and acquainted him with the Penalty thereof also, that *in the Day he did it, he should Dye the Death.*

Now Mankind had Faith in his Maker, and in his Conscience found himself bound to obey

the Command given him, and had Strength to resist the Temptation, till the Woman (the weaker Vessel) believed a Lye, and looked upon the Beauty of the Thing presented, and

let up a Desire to be wise, and to know good and evil, and to be as Gods; so in this Hope of gaining and bettering their Estate, became subject unto

Rom. 8. 20.

Every particular within themselves must come to know the Loss and full Crucifixion, and Death of the one, and the Life and Resurrection of the other, before Restoration can be known.

\* Vanity, and hereby the Light that shined in the Heart and Conscience became veiled, and the Image and Glory of God that appeared therein, became lost as the Image of the Selfish Will and Desire rose up, and became prevalent, the Image of God declined, and departed; and when man lost his

his Faith, which was held in the pure Conscience, which Faith was as an Anchor, by which Conscience as a Ship in a Storm was staid for a while, from being made a wrack ; I say when he lost this Faith in the Word and Command of God, and believed the Serpent's Lyes, he soon made Shipwrack of both : and no sooner were their own Eyes opened, but the Eye and Light of God, which shined in them became stopped, and veiled, and they lost the Glory and Benefit of it ; no sooner their own Wisdom and Knowledge sprung up ; but the Wisdom of God departed, and Innocency the heavenly Clothing became lost, and Nakedness appeared, Faith and a good Conscience destroyed, Shame, Guilt, Fear and Hiding the Effects of it succeeded : So though Conscience in its primitive Estate was Pure, Clean and Undeiled, \* yet was liable and capable to be corrupted, darkened and defiled, even as the Mind departed from a due Regard and obedience of the Law and Command of God, and sleighted his Light and Glory, which shined, and

† The same befalls Mankind at this Day when they loose their Anchor.

\* The same Danger is still, even among such as are presented as a Chast Virgin to Christ, and have attained to an innocent Sinless Estate, and a Dwelling-Place in Paradise



radif; therefore the  
Duty of all such is to  
watch and pray, that  
they enter not into  
Temptation, and are  
beguiled as the *Serpent*  
did *Eve*.

illuminated his Heart and  
Conscience; then Clouds  
of Error, and Mists, and  
Fogs of Self-will thoughts  
and Imaginations soon a-  
rose, and darkened the  
pure Air, and eclipsed the

Glory of that Sun, that before shined in him,  
& drew a vail before the Light of God's Coun-

*Gen. 3. 10.* tenance, which to behold was his  
Joy, and Delight; now become his  
Fear & Terror, now a Night come over him, &  
he runs in the Darkness thereof to hide himself  
among the Trees of the Garden from the Pre-  
sence of God; this was the Way and Work  
of the first *Adam* in the Beginning, and his  
Children are found in the same at this Day up-  
on the Face of the whole Earth, he that readeth  
let him understand.

Now when this noble Part or Capacity in  
Man is thus clouded, and darkened, and de-  
filed through Disobedience to the Law of his  
God, he then goeth astray more and more,  
corrupteth himself through his Imaginations  
and Inventions more and more, and according  
to that he entertaineth and joins himself to;

*1 Cor. 6. 16, 17.* so becomes even Darkness  
and a Child of it: And of  
the most excellent, and best Part of the Cre-  
ation



ation becomes the worst, and the principallest Instrument in the Hand of the wicked One to lead, even Nature it Self, out of its Course, and to burden, oppress, corrupt and abuse all Things under his Power, verifying that Maxim among Men, *The best of things being corrupted become the worst.*

Now in this Degenerate, Falne, Clouded, Darkened and Corrupted Estate the Sun of Righteousness, and holy Principle of Light, which at first shined clear in the

Conscience \* remains in it self the same, pure and undefiled, and doth glance forth its Eternal Beams of Light into this Darkness, and gives Mankind in that Estate some Sense and Knowledge of their Lost.

\* Though Mankind fell from and lost the Light and Glory of God, yet that in it self remain'd the same, and became his Judge and Reprover, which before was his Comforter.

Degenerated, Corrupted, Miserable Estate; and in the Cool of the Day calls Transgressing Man to an Account, as it did *Adam and Cain*, and convinceth them of their Evil Deeds, and calls to a Repentance or Returning again into the same Way he went out of, even by the Help and Guidance of that Light and Holy Spirit which at first shined in his Heart and Conscience, wherein he enjoyed the Light of God's Countenance, and walked and lived in his

his Presence without Rebuke. But being Departed, Degenerated and Turned in his Mind from the Good into the Evil, from the Glory and Light that once shined in him, and and was pleasant for his Eye to behold, into Sin and Transgression; he is by it pursued, re-proved and convinced, in order to turn him back again: And whosoever hearkens to this

|| The Way to Paradise and a Unde-filed Estate again.

Reproof, and obeyes the Spirit of Truth, which convinceth of Sin, and loves the Hand that smites them, and submitteth to the same, shall come to witness and enjoy the Unde-filed, Regenerate, Happy Estate again, and enter in through the Gate into the City and Paradise of God again. But he that hates the Reproofs thereof, and rebels against the Spirit, and humbleth not himself under the Mighty Hand of God, which smites for Transgression, goes forward into utter Darknes, stumbles & falls, and rises no more to the Resurrection of Life and Felicity, but is filled with Fear, and encompassed with Terrors round about, upwards and downwards, nothing but Tribulation, Anguish and Vexation of Spirit attends Mankind in this Estate, wherein his chief Companions are a Guilty Defiled Conscience, wheroin are written Grievous Things against him, and

a Wounded Spirit, a Burden too heavy for *Cain* to bear; though but the Fruit of his own Doings, and the Crop of his own sowing

Now, in this State of Loss, Misery and Bondage, wherein the Heart and Conscience is defiled and Corrupted, there is great Working and Contriving in the minds of Mankind how to find that again which is lost, and how to be delivered from the Misery and Bondage wherein he is fallen; and this is the Nature of all Mankind in the Fall to seek out many Inventions, and to go down to *Egypt* for Help, and to walk by the Light of his own Fire, and the Sparks that he hath kindled, and in the crooked Wayes of his own finding out, and to reject the Help, Counsel and straight Way of the Lord; he being darkened and deceived, and the Light of Christ in his Conscience veiled, he ever did and doth at this day, in that Estate, take one thing for

another, viz. Good for Evil, and Evil for Good, Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light, &c. And being thus far decei-

Degenerate man in all Ages ever was mistaken, and alwayes took one thing for another; Good for Evil, and Evil for Good;

Light for Darkness, & Darkness for Light, &c. which Mistake is the Ground of all Error and Mischief in the World in matters of Religion.

ved, exalts [and sets up the one for the other, so when he hath found out a Way and Worship that liketh him, and sewed something together, though but leaves, he will endeavour to cover his Nakedness therewith, and to hide himself from the Wrath t<sup>h</sup>at is revealed in him, and awakened against him, and when he hath invented a Medicine to cure his Sickness, and a Salve to heal his Wound, though deceitfully, and found Mortar to daub up the Breach, though it be untempered, his Conscience being darkened, and his Heart deceived, he will plead Conscience for the Use of the same and sets them up as the only Remedies to be found, &c. So natural is it for degenerate Man to worship the Works of his own hands, and to follow the Inventions, Conceiving, Thoughts & Imaginations of his own corrupt Heart, & yet call it the Way of the Lord, and if any of his Neighbours, or Brethren come to hear and obey the Voice of God, and to follow the Light and Guidance of his Spirit, & to find Acceptance with him, and refuse in a good Conscience to God to follow his direction, and to make Use of his invented Means, and to bow down and worship the Image he hath set up, then

The Cause of  
Cain's Anger against  
his Brother, or the  
Wicked against the  
Righteous in this  
Age.

then Envy and Hatred ariseth, and Violence  
 breaks forth, and Blood toucheth Blood, even  
 because such will not, nor cannot for Consci-  
 ence sake, see, & say, and do as he doth; bow  
 to his Image and Invention, and worship as he  
 doth, though he finds not Acceptance of God,  
 nor the Light of his Countenance towards  
 him in his Worship, no more then *Cain* that  
 Religious Murderer did, whose Offering was  
 the Fruit of that Ground that's cursed, which  
 never did, nor never will bring forth Fruit  
 well-pleasing to God: And it is from Man-  
 kind labouring in this Ground ( being driven  
 out of the Paradise and Garden of God ) that  
 all the Diversity of Opini-  
 ons, Notions, Concei-  
 vings, Thoughts, Imagi-  
 nations and Contrivances,  
 Forms and Fashions of in-  
 vented Worship upon the  
 Face of the whole Earth  
 springeth and ariseth, and all the Envy, Ha-  
 tred, Cruelty, Bloodshed, Compelling Force-  
 ing and Persecution, about Fashions of Wor-  
 ship and Religion among all the Sects in  
*Christendom* ariseth from this Ground, and all  
 that are found in the Work thereof ( though  
 they may pretend Conscience, and Zeal to  
 God, and the Maintenance of the Gospel, and  
 the

The Rise of Opini-  
 ons, and the Cause of  
 Cruelty, and Persecu-  
 tion about them.

the Good of Souls ) are of the Spirit of *Cain* the first Murderer about Religion, and his Reward they will find measured into their own Bosoms from the Hand of God.

Now the divers Sects, and formal Worshipers in *Christendom*, are ready to stand up plead, and contend for their Forms and Invention, and Way and Manner of Worship, & also cry out for Liberty of Conscience in their Way, and for the Practice of their Fashion in Worship, and will also

Every Selfish private narrow Spirit Sect and Opinion, though in its Rise may pretend otherwise hath Persecution at the Bottom.

in their Infancy cry out against Persecution ; when they want only Number ; Power & Strength to persecute themselves, which when they attain unto, and their Horns grow strong, and get Crowns upon them, they will, and have been found doing the same Work, as might be demonstrated at large ; but being obvious to the Observation of the Judicious, and intending Brevity, I forbear ; and indeed they can do no otherwise, being of a private, narrow, self-conceited Spirit, ignorant of the true Liberty of Conscience, which Liberty stands not in this or that, or the other invented Form or Fashion of Worship, Conceiving or Opinion ; but in the Light & Power of God, which every particular

Man

Man and Woman upon the Face of all the whole Earth ought to know, and experience enlightening and ruling in his Conscience, and

☞ Conscience can never enjoy its true Liberty till it come into this Estate.

The Consciences of Men are generally weak, darkened deiled, corrupted, vitiated, (and which is worst of all, some who have lost the Day of their Visitation, are seared as with an hot Iron) and in this State have a Bond and Tye upon their Consciences, which ought to be broken, and cast off, till which, they are liable to make Conscience of such Things they ought not; as might be instanced through all Sects, both among *Indians, Turks, Jews* and *Titular Christians*, and the Evils and Mischiefs that ensue from hence are very many.

☞ Conscience in the State above, is the great Troubler of the World of Mankind, and the Evils that are brought forth and committed, under the Notion, Pretence and Seal of Conscience, are Evils of the greatest Magnitude.

Now nothing under Heaven is able to rectifie the Conscience, enlighten, cleanse, and purifie, and redeem it into true Liberty; but the Light and Power of God, shining and operating in the Conscience, as it did before Transgression entered, before Sin was committed, and before Opinion, In-

What alone is able to bring Liberty of Conscience.



vention, dark Thoughts and Imaginations sprung up; this alone is able to purge and cleane the Conscience, from Darkness and dead Works, and make it an undefiled Habitation for God again, as it was in the Beginning; this is the State wherein Liberty of Conscience is known and enjoyed, even when

☞ Man comes to have his Conscience exercised in, and ruled and governed by the Light, Spirit and Power of God, then man's Heart becomes his Throne, and he sits and rules therein, and that which usurped it, is cast down and the Prince of the Air, which got his rule and place there by Disobedience, is cast out.

And all those that come not to know this brought to pass within themselves, nor ☞ are not in the Way, that leadeth thereto, are but of a private selfish Opinion and Sect; though (as above) while they are little and low, and small in Number, they may plead for Liberty of Conscience, and cry against Persecution, Force, Imposition and Violence about Religion; yet when their Opinion prevails, and the Horns thereof grow strong thereby they will push towards the East, West, North and South, and will smite their fellow-Servants; and as I have said before, it can be no otherwise then so, until man comes to know the universal Light and Spirit of God to shine  
and



☞ & rule in his Conscience, & establish it in perfect Liberty, and Love to the whole Creation of God, and to all the Works of his Hands, and in Obedience to all his holy Commandments; in this stands the perfect Liberty of Conscience.

Now for want of this the *Titular Christians* of all Sorts and Sects, are so wedded to their private & selfish Opinions, Traditions, Notions, Conceptions, Apprehensions, Comprehensions, Thoughts and Imaginations about Religion, Church and Worship, and matters relating to Conscience, that they envy, hate, bite and devour one another about them. One will persecute about his *Mass Book* and *Sacrament of the Altar*, another about his *Common Prayer-Book*, *Maintenance* and *Church Discipline*, another about his *Directory*: another about his *Church-Faith* and *Agreement of the Assembly of Divines* (so called) and about *Bread and Wine*, and *Water*, *Dayes* and *Times*, and other outward Things: They will quarrel with tear and devour one another, ☞ and all like so many ravenous Beasts will prey upon the Sheep, *Ephraim* against *Manasses*, and *Manasses* against *Ephraim*; but both against *Judith*: Every Sect in *Christendom*, one against another, devided like the Builders of *Babel*; yet all against the tender, meek, harmless, Lamb like Spirit of *Jesus* in whom

whomsoever it appears, that in all Ages since the Fall and Apostacy grew up as a Lilly among Thornes, prik'd on every

A Thorn may hurt a Lilly, but a Lilly cannot hurt a Thorn.

Side, & as a Lamb among wolves, which though hurt and prey'd upon, wants the very Nature & Capacity of hurting again, or rendring Evil for Evil, even as an outward Lilly doth a Thorn, or a Lamb a Wolf.

So that this is an infallible Sign and Token, both of the one and the other, of him whose Conscience is at Liberty to serve the Lord, and loves his whole Creation, and is at Unity and Peace therewith: and of him who hath his Conscience bound under a private Opinion, corrupted and defiled with Envy, Hatred and Evil-Will against his Brother, and Neighbour, about Matters of Sacrifice, Religion, Faith and Worship And whoever thou art, and of what Opinion soever thou art, hereby thou mayst measure and try thy self, and find of what Generation and Stock thou art of, whether of the righteous, or the wicked; whether thou art a Lilly or a Thorn, a Lamb or a Wolf; and whether thy Conscience be at Liberty or bound: If thou find a Mind,

An infallible Signe  
where Conscience  
is not Liberty.

Will or Inclination in  
thee, to Envy, Hate, Per:  
secute

*secrete & lay violent Hands like Cain*, upon thy Brother and Neighbour; thou mayst assure thy self, and infallibly know, that thy Conscience is degenerated & defiled, and that thou art born of the Flesh, and that thou art a Thorn, and no Lilly, a Wolf and no Lamb: And this Flesh thou art born of, is the Flesh of the Whore the false Church, which hath drunk the Blood of the Saints, and Martyrs in all Ages; and this Whore thy Mother, hath not only nursed thee up; but made thee drunk with the Wine of her Fornication; and thou art a Citizen of *Mystery Babylon* the great, and a Stranger to the beloved City of God, and a hater of those, that dwell therein; notwithstanding thou mayst have a golden cup of Profession, which thy Mother holds forth to the Nations; yet thy Conscience is defiled and thy Heart corrupted, and so far darkened and captivated under Bondage & strong Delusion, that notwithstanding thou appearest like a Thorn, and in the Nature of a Wolf, hurting the Lilly, and worrying the Lamb; yet thou thinks, thou art doing God good Service therein, being made so drunk with the Whore's Cup, and blinded in thy superstitious Zeal, that thou takes the

Lilly

A perfect Sign of one that is made drunk with the Wine of Fornication.

Lilly for a Thorn, and the Lamb for a Wolf, and the Whore, thy Mother, for the Lamb's Wife.

And now this is an infallible Sign where Liberty of Conscience is enjoyed, where the Light, Love and Power of God rules in the

Conscience; such if his Brother or Neighbour hath his Conscience in Bondage, or is weak, being

A true infallible Sign where Liberty of Conscience is enjoyed.

vailed and darkned so far as to believe a Lye, and to make Conscience of doing that, which he ought not to do, whether it be to worship as the *Adams-Book* prescribes, or as the *Common Prayer-Book*, *Directory*, *Church-Faith*, *Assembly of Divines* (so called) or as any other invented Platform of Religion Commands, I say he that hath

his Conscience truly enlightened, and is a Christian indeed, doth not hate and envy his Brother or Neighbour therefore neither hath he any evil Will towards him in, this Estate, and hath no more inclination to put forth his Hand against his Person, Life, Liberty or Estate, because of his Conscientious Errors, and Religious Practices, then he hath against his own Life; but instead thereof, in the universal Love of God, finds it his Duty to pity such in his Heart; and having obtained Liberty of Conscience himself, and found

found the universal Medicine; which if applied is able to cure all sick and feeble Minds, wounded Spirits, weak and disordered Consciences, he is willing and ready to tell his Brother and Neighbour, what the Lord hath done for his Soul, and how and where he came to find the precious Pearl, and to inform and instruct them how they may find the same, and exhort and perswade them to receive and make use and tryal of the same Medicine that hath cured him, though for this his Love and good Will, he meets with much Exercise and Hardship from the ill-natured and Ignorant, and much Opposition and Scorn from the selfish-wise and prudent; this was the Portion of the righteous, and Ministers of the everlasting Gospel from the ungrateful World in all Ages, \* who were constrained in the Love of God to run to and fro among them, that Knowledge might be encreased, and to warn Men to flee from the Wrath which is to come; and knowing the Terrors of the Lord, perswaded Men to be reconciled to God: Thus they did and do in Obedience to him, and Love to their Souls (and not for Gold and Silver, and selfish Ends; but to discharge their Consciences in the Sight of God) this hath been the Labour of Love,

The Work and End  
of the true Ministry.

and Travail of the righteous in all Ages, who come to have their Consciences made tender, and truly enlightened, cleansed, purified and set at Liberty from all that did defile them; they never persecuted, hated, hurt or destroyed any about Matters of Conscience and Religion, though erroneous in their Opinions, and

☞ superstitious in their Practices; *neither ought any to be troubled, vexed and ruined in their Persons, Liberties, Lives and Estates because of those Things, especially when their Opinions tend not to the Ruin, Hurt and Destruction of Mankind, and his outward well being and humane Society*; But some such Opinions there are, which indeed are as Mon-

☞ sters in Nature, destroying natural Affection, Violating the Bounds of Humanity, under the Cloak and Pretence of Religion and Christianity; and some are so far besotted in their Opinions, that they will plead Conscience for the Prosecution of them, though thereby they lay waste the Property, Life and Liberty of Persons that are of a contrary, or different mind and Judgment to them, though better livers then themselves.

Now the End of all good Order and Government among Men, is to  
 The End of Magistrate  
 & true Government. preserve and defend their  
 Properties, Liberties and

Lives from the Teeth, and Mouthes of such as would spoil and rob them of either. And among all the Beasts of prey this *blind Zeal, misguided Conscience and dark selfish Opinion* is most ravenous, this Wolf in Sheeps Cloathing hath sharp Teeth and cruel Clawes, and a wilde, untamed, devouring Spirit, notwithstanding his pretence of Zeal and Conscience for the Christian Religion; 'tis the Spirit of *Cain & Saul*, that Murderer and Persecutor about Sacrifice and Worship, which will be rising up against his Brother and Neighbour; as it hath been, so it is at this Day, he that is born of the Flesh will persecute him that is born of the Spirit, &c. But whosoever is led by his (religious or rather) irreligious Opinions to endeavour the Hurt and Ruin of his Brother or Neighbour about matters of Religion and Conscience; if he accomplish and effect the same, he is an *Evil Doer*, and ought to suffer as an *Evil Doer*; and he that hath Good-will to all, and seeks the good of all, and hurts no man though he be of a contrary Mind and Judgment to him, and of a defiled Conscience, and erroneous Opinions, he is the *Well Doer*. And the Laws of God and all good Men, who

are



are appointed to Rule for God, are a *Terror* to the One, and a *Praise and Encouragement* to the Other: And such brutish unnatural *Opinionists*, whose Consciences are not only darkened, defiled and corrupted, but seared as with a hot Iron: who, under the Profession of *Christianity* dare entertain and assert such Cruel Impious Tenets or Opinions, as, that it is lawful to Destroy the Property, Liberty and Life of Men about the *Christian Religion*; & to account all that conform not to his Form and Fashion of Religion, Tradition and Invention no better then Weeds and Vermin, Corrupt and Cankered Members, fit to be pulled up, cut off, burnt and destroyed, where this Ravenous Beast is prevalent, as in some Countries beyond the Seas, it destroyes every Green Thing, this *Spirit and Bloody Opinion* is hated of God and all Good Men, and is as a Monster risen out of the Bottomless Pit, and as the great *Apollyon*, or Destroyer, to be chained and shut up therein again: *Oh God! hasten the Time thereof is the Breathing of the Righteous.*

Oh! how Lamentable is it to consider what Work and Havock this Spirit hath made under a Corrupt, Blind, Mis guided Conscience, and Ignorant Zeal, especially in this Part of the World, called *Christendom*, about Church,  
Relig.



*Religion and Worship, the Mind and Conscience* (the best and noblest Capacity of Man being in its primitive Estate) when darkned, defiled, corrupted, hardned and seared, becomes the worst, even a Habitation for Devils, *formed* and *transformed* like unto an Angel of Light ;

so that those that are not deceived and ruled by the

One, may by the Other :

But in all Ages the \* transformed Devil, who assumeth the Form of Religion and Profession of Godliness, hath proved the greatest Deceiver, and the most Cruel, as might be evidenced at large by his Work in this present Age, and throughout the Records of many Generations.

But all that come to return in their Minds to the Light and Glory of God, which at first shined in the Heart & Conscience of Mankind, & made it a fit Receptacle or Dwelling-place for himself, & believes, walks & abides in the same, shall again come to *know & live* in the same

Estate

The Greatest and Strongest Poyson of Souls, Bodies, Lives, &c. of Men is in the Whore's Golden Cup; and all that drink freely thereof (or are compelled thereto) are deeply infected therewith. And the Nations reel with the Wine of her Fornications.

The Way out of all Selfish and Private Opinions and Cruelty about them, into perfect Freedom and Liberty of Conscience.

Estate man enjoyed before his Conscience was defiled, before the Vail came over his Heart and Understanding, before the Image of God was lost, before any Place or Credit was given to the Serpent's Lyes; where true *Liberty of Conscience* was lived in, and the Light of God's Countenance enjoyed, the *Serpent ruled over*, and the *Earth subdued*, in the Paradise of God, The Light that now shineth out of Darkness in the Hearts of Thousands and Ten Thousands, leads not only into these things; but farther into the Life & State of the second *Adam*, against whom the Serpent never could nor shall prevail: And the God of Heaven and Earth, who hath caused or commanded it to shine, hath the Praise and Glory thereof, both now and for evermore.

W. S.

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*Postscript*

## Postscript.

SUCH *Opinions* in Religion, which bind man's Conscience to seek and endeavour the Hurt of his Brother or Neighbour, in his Name, Person, Liberty, Estate or Life, because he doth not believe and practise the same Manner and Form of Worship as he doth, are very Cruel, Unnatural and Unreasonable; *First*, Because many times People come by their *Opinions* as Heirs come by their *Estates* Hereditarily; if their Parents or Tutors were of this or that Sect of the *Jews* or *Mahumetans*, their Children commonly are trained up and educated in the same; if of one of the Sects among the *Christians* (so called), then commonly the Child is trained and catechised in the same; and many Parents take as much Care to leave their Children possessed of their *Religious Opinions*, as they do of their *Estates*, as might be shewed at large, both among *Jews*, *Turks* and *Christians*. And in *Christendom*, the greatest Proof many have to prove themselves *Christians*, is, that their Parents and Tutors were

so called and accounted, and they have received and walked in their Traditions, and conformed to the Orders and Discipline of Holy Church (so called), and they believe as the Church believes; and 'tis their Opinion, this *is Christianity enough to carry them to Heaven*, many being bound in their Consciences by a traditional implicate Faith to their Hereditary *Christianity*, or the Traditions of their Forefathers, that they never Question their Way nor Title therein; they never knew no other, nor better, nor dare not for Fear seek further, their Consciences being bound under their private traditional Opinions and Ceremonies: Now, that such should have their Bodies hurt, and their Lives destroyed, and their Estates rent from them and their Posterity, because they will not change and renounce their Opinions they have been bred up and educated in, and conform to that Opinion and Form of Worship that hath the Sword in its Hand, and is become National in the Country where he lives, is both Cruel, Unnatural and Unreasonable, whether he be Jew, *Mahumetan*, *Christian*, *Papist* or *Protestant*.

2dly, Because no man is able to change his Own Mind in Religion when he pleaseth, or when commanded, nor break those Chains of Tradition he hath been educated in from his Child-

Childhood; neither is he able to shake off those Bolts and Fetters of Opinion, and change his Faith and Belief, when he pleaseth: For when man's Conscience is defiled with Erroneous Opinions, and his Mind and Understanding darkened, and bound under the Chains thereof, he is not able to deliver himself, nor to purifie his own Conscience, nor enlighten his own Understanding, nor can any man deliver the Soul of his Brother: nothing less then the Knowledge and Experience of the Light, Spirit and Mighty Power of God's appearing and shining in the Conscience, and enlightening the Mind and Understanding, breaking the Prison-Doors of Opinion, and pulling down the Strong Hold of Imagination, is able to effect those things; therefore all such as have their Consciences purified, their Minds and Understandings thereby enlightened; are delivered and redeemed from the Spirit of Envy and Cruelty; and from all private Opinions and Bondage of Darknes, and lives and walks in the Light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ Jesus, which brings Peace on Earth and Good-will to Men; and such never Envyed any, nor Hurt any about Religion, though *Jews, Turks and Infidels.*

Oh! the Weight and Burden of this envious Bloody Spirit of *Persecution* in *Christen-*

*dom*, which is sate down in the Throne of Conscience, and wrapt about with the Mantle of Zeal for Religion, is very great and ponderous ; it is the greatest Burden the Earth bears, and the greatest Troubler of the World of Mankind ; 'tis the great Whore that *John* saw ride upon the Scarlet coloured Beast, and sate upon the Waters ; and it is the Beast he saw rise out of the Earth, with two Horns like a Lamb, yet speaks like a Dragon, and makes Fire come down from Heaven, in the Sight of Men, and causeth all both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond to receive a Mark in their right Hand, or in their Fore-Heads, that no Man might buy or sell, save he that had the Mark or the Name of the Beast, or the Number of his Name ; this Spirit is the Womb, out of which springeth all the Force and Violence, and cruel Inventions of Torture and Spoil of Bodies, Goods and Liberties about Difference in Opinion, Faith and Worship, which as is said before, is cruel, unreasonable and unnatural because by the Laws of God & all good Men no Man ought to suffer, but according to the Nature of his Offence ; if his Offence be visible, natural and corporal, & belonging to things of this world, then his Punishment ought to be natural, and corporal, and visibly executed upon him ; if his Offence be spiritual, and relating to the

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invisible Things of the Mind, Heart and Conscience, in Matters of Faith and Worship towards God, & the Life & World to come, then their Punishment is to be spiritual and executed spiritually; and the Weapons to be used against such, are not to be carnal: The Bodies of Men ought not to be inquisition'd and tortur'd, nor their Goods spoyled for the errors of their Minds, or the Difference of their religious Perswasions; wherever this is found and practised, it may be justly called cruel and unreasonable, and bloody Persecution, though under the Pretence of Conscience, and Zeal for Religion: And the true *Christian* and Church of Christ, never had, nor ever will have a Hand in such Work; it is the Whore the false Church, and her Children, the great red Dragon that gets into Heaven, and the Beast that ariseth out of the Sea or Waters, on which the Whore sitteth, and the false Prophet, and the three unclean Spirits like Frogs, that come out of their Mouths, that corrupteth the Earth, and fills

What Persecution is.

The Beast, the Whore, the false Prophet, the three unclean Spirits, Mystery-Babylon the great the Mother of Harlots, &c. rules and reigns not only at Rome in Italy, Spain and other popish Countreyes where the Romish Sect prevails; as some private *Opinions* have imagined; but

C it



but is universally to be found, reigning throughout all the Sects in *Christendom*, and in the whole World,

it with Violence; it is this Woman, this Mystery *Babylon* the great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, that is drunk with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus; and by her Sorceries are all Nations deceived, and in her was (and is) found the Blood of Prophets and of Saints, and of all that were (and are) slain upon the Earth.

Now the Voice from Heaven is heard, which saith, *Come out of her my People, that ye partake not of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues*: And all that hear obey and follow this heavenly Voice, come to be led out of Mystery *Babylon*, into the heavenly City *Jerusalem*, which comes down from God out of Heaven, and to be made Citizens thereof, who are at Unity within themselves; and though the Gates stand open there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a Lye; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life: Here all is shut out that entered in through Sin and Transgression, and through the Subtilty and Lyes of the Serpent, and a Redemption and Restoration into the glorious primitive Estate, that God made Man-

Man-



Mankind in in the Beginning, where his Mind Heart and Conscience is set at Liberty, cleansed and purified from all that did defile them, and here he is delivered from following all his carnal Inventions, private Opinions and Notions, where the Envy, Anger and Wrath is exercised, into the peaceable universal Light, and Love to the whole Creation of God.

But while People are carnally-minded, and their Consciences darkened & defiled they are captivated by a private selfish Spirit, and are bound under some dark affected Opinion or other about Religion; in this State some will be for *Paul*, some for *Apello*, some for *Cephas*; but none for Christ; some of one Sect or Opinion, and of one Sort & Form of Worship, and some of another; but all bound under one Link or other of the Chain of Darknes, and are Slaves to the Prince thereof, who hath got the Rule in their Minds, Hearts and Consciences, and such of his Vassals, as are inclined to seem religious, he will furnish them with a Form, Likeness and Patern, if need be, even of Heavenly Things themselves, according to the State, Place and Country they inhabit, and the Region of Darknes and Shadow of Death they dwell under; whether in *Christendom*, or in any other Part of the World; hence

many are bound in their Consciences, to worship according to the Precepts and Commands of *Mahomet* or the Turkish *Alcoron*, others according to the Traditions of the scattered *Jews* and *Indians*; others according to the *Pope* and his *Mass Book*, and other Invented Trumpery, others according to the divers Sorts of invented *Liturgies* and Forms of Worship, Likenesses and Images, which they have set up in their carnal Minds, and darkened Understandings wherein their corrupt Faiths, and defiled Consciences, are imployed as Champions to contend for, and vindicate every one his own private carnal Opinion, Tradition and Form of Worship: And the same Spirit of Darkness, that leads into these Diversities

The Fruit of Mankind hating the Light and running, and walking, and working in Darkness.

of Opinions, & humane, carnal Inventions about the Worship of God; leads Men to hate, \* envy and persecute one another about them.

And all these Things come to pass amongst Mankind, for want of believing in the Light, Grace, Spirit and Power of God, that shines, appears and operates in the Mind, Heart and Conscience of Mankind, according to the State it finds him in, either to reprove or commend, justifie or condemn, which Light, Grace

Grace and Spirit is one, and leads all that obey it and follow it into Oneness of Mind, & Oneness of Heart, and into the One standing and everlasting Worship, which is in the Spirit and in the Truth, where Acceptance is felt, and the Light of God's Countenance enjoyed, the Partition-Wall broken down, and the Enmity slain, and the Serpent's Head bruised within, by the springing up of the promised Seed, and powerful Appearance of Christ within, who leadeth into that blessed Love and Charity, which never faileth, which thinketh no Evil, where the rejoycing is not in Iniquity, but in the Truth.

And whoever thou art that readest these Things, and art not come to witness within thy self, the virtuous Efficacy of the Power, Life and Blood of Jesus, to cleanse, purge and purifie thy Mind, Heart and Conscience, from all that doth defile, and set them at perfect Liberty to serve the Lord, and to lead thee into the heavenly City, where the Book of Life is kept, and to see thy Name written therein, and also his Name imprinted in thy Forehead, bearing his heavenly Image as thou hast born the earthly; I say, except thou knowest these Things wrought by the Spirit and Power of God in thee and for thee; thy Mind, Heart and Conscience remains defiled,

and under Bondage to thine own Inventions, private Opinions and Notions; and he that is called the Prince of the Air, rules in thy heart, and thou art captivated, and carried away with the windy Doctrines, Rudiments and carnal Ordinances, and Traditions of men, and art tasting, touching and handling those Things, which perish with the using; and art prone & liable to bite, tear, murder and devour thy Brother and Neighbour about them; so art as a whited Wall, and painted Sepulchre, and professing Hypocrite, and Titular Christian, a direct Phanatick and Sectarian, and art like *Cain* a Fugitive in the Earth, which God hath cursed, that brings forth Bryars and Thorns, which tear the Sheep, and hurt the Lilly; this is thy State and Condition, let thy Talk, Profession, Notion, Opinion, Form and Fashion of Religion be what it will, and whether thou art a *Jew*, *Mahometan*, *Papist*, or *Protestant*, while thy Mind, Heart and Conscience is defiled, darkened, captivated and bound under with the Chains of Opinion, Tradition and Precepts of men. thou canst not enjoy Liberty of Conscience thy self, nor suffer others; and if thou compassest Sea and Land to make Profelytes to thy Opinion and Tradition, and hast Power to force and compel an Outward Conformity to the same, thou  
makest

makest them two fold more the Children of Hell then before. Force, Cruelty and Violence may make *Hypocrites* and *Formalists*, but *No True Worshippers of God in the Spirit, nor Christians indeed.*

Finally, to Force and Compel by Corporal Punishments in Matters of Conscience and Religion, is infallibly contrary to, and inconsistent with, the very Nature of true Religion and Being of *Christianity*: And among whomsoever its found and practised, 'tis an evident Demonstration that the Pure Religion they are ignorant of, and Strangers to; and such are only *Christians* in *Name* and *Opinion*, and of a dark, narrow, private, self-conceited spirit, priding it self with it own Notions and lofty Imaginations, grounded upon the Education and Tradition received from his Forefathers, and the *carnal Comprehensions and Conceiving*s of his own corrupt Heart from the *ancient Writings of Holy Men*: hence it is that every Sect and Opinionist, like so many Beasts with Horns, push one against another, hate, bite, tear and devour one another, each endeavouring to sit down as a Queen in the Seat of the Scornful (exercising themselves in things that are too high) Imperiously measuring, trying and judging his Brother and Neighbour, who differs from him by his self.

ish, carnal, dark, exalted spirit, who passeth under and assumes the Name of a *Sheep*, though in Nature and Work he be a *Wolf*; and if this Beast of Prey hath Horns and Claws strong enough to make Spoil according to its Nature, it would hardly leave the Bones till the morrow: This is the Generation whose

Proverbs *Teeth are as Swords, and their Jaw-*

30 14. *Teeth as Knives to devour the Poor from off the Earth, and the Needy*

*from among men*; this is the Generation also who are pure in their own Eyes, yet are not washed from their Filthiness; but is as a polluted Leper, full of Sores from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot: From this Generation ariseth the Cry and Violence against the Innocent, as *Hereticks* and *Blasphemers*, haling them before Magistrates, and hurrying them to Goals, Inquisitions, Gallowses and Fire, tearing the Flesh from the Bones, and the Life from the Body about Matters of Religion, Church, Faith, Worship and Conscience, all which is infallibly the Fruit and Effect of that Spirit of *Cain*, that Envious Sacrifice, that can Worship with one Hand, and Murder with the other; call God *Father*, and with the same Tongue call Christ Jesus a *Blasphemer*, *Deceiver* and *Child of the Devil*, and lay their Wicked Hands upon him, as an

*Evil-*

*Evil-doer* not fit to live: this is and hath been the Work of all the Private, Carnal, Dark, Self-conceited Opinionists in *Christendom*; who are all Members of the False Church, and of the Great City *Mystery Babylon*, whose Citizens are all of *defiled Minds, corrupt Hearts, and darkened, misguided, if not seared Consciences*: And none of this Work hath been, nor never will be found in the true Church, nor among the Citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, whose Defence and Weapons never was nor will be Carnal, but Spiritual, and Mighty through God, to the breaking and casting down every thing that exalteth it self against the Prosperity thereof; whose Warfare was never against mens Bodies, Lives nor Estates, to destroy the One, and possess the Other; neither do the Thoughts thereof enter into the Heart of a True *Christian* to Hurt his Brother or Neighbour, because of Difference in Religion, and Understanding of things relating thereto: Yet the True Church hath its Way and Means of Defence, and every living Member thereof is in its Place and Capacity, engaged and bound by the Law of the Spirit of Life and in the Universal Love of God; to be watchful and diligent against the creeping in of Selfish Private Opinions, and the broaching of Damnable Doctrines, or the growing



growing up of any hurtful Weeds in the Garden of God; but as I have said, this Defence is spiritual, viz. the Light, Power and Spirit of God revealed in the Inward Parts; this Church puts on the whole Armour of Light, the Sword of the Spirit, the Helmet of Salvation, the Breast-plate of Righteousness, and the very Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel (or with that which prepares the Way of the Gospel); I say, these are Weapons of the True Church, and of every Member thereof, whereby those that say they are Apostles, and are not, are tryed, and found Lyars, and the

Read Rev. 1, 2, 3.  
and the Lord open thy  
Understanding.

Errors and Doctrines of  
Balaam detected, and the  
Teachings of the Woman  
Jezebel, who calleth her  
Self a Prophetess, resisted; yea, all the Faults  
and Errors of the Seven Churches are reprov'd  
and judg'd by the Son of God, who holdeth

Note.

|| The Son of God  
is in the midst of his  
People, who are like  
Gold tryed in the  
Fire, and made  
Vessels of Honour,  
to hold the Heaven-

the Seven Stars in his  
Right Hand, and walks  
in the midst of the || Seven  
Golden Candlesticks; and  
those that turn not at his  
Reproof, Repent, and  
are Reformed by his  
Judgments, will assuredly  
in the End hear this fatal

ly

Sentence,

Sentence, I gave her space to repent, and she repented not; behold I will cast her into a Bed, and them that commit Adultery with her, into great Tribulation; I will kill her Children with Death, and all the Churches shall know, that I am he that searcheth the Reins and Hearts, & giveth to every one according to his Works; He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

ly Treasure, and Temples of the Living God; this is the true Church, that what she bindeth and looseth on Earth, is confirmed in Heaven, against which the Gates of Hell cannot prevail; out of the Pale of this Church there's no Salvation: This is the Holy Church that cannot err, where the infallible Judg-

ment is, even in whom the Son of God lives and walks in the midst, and hath by his bright and powerful Appearance broken down and removed all that is contrary to him, and set the Mind, Heart and Conscience at perfect Liberty from all Private Opinions, Selfish Conceivings, Dark Thoughts and Lofty Imaginations, which once did defile them: In this Church is the one Mind, one Heart and one Judgment; and she hath the one Faith, one Baptism and one Lord, & is as a Coat woven from top to bottom, without Seam:  
And

*And all the Members of this Church are living Stones, fitted and squared for the House and Habitation of God; in the fitting and preparing of which, the Sound or Noise of the Workman's Tool is not heard, nor Self had in any Reputation; but the Praise and Glory of all is to God, the Worker of all in his People; to whom all Honour is due forever and evermore.*

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Something after, which should have been placed before.

**R** *Eader*, I would have thee seriously weigh & consider what thou readeſt in this ſmall *Treatiſe*, and with the Measure of Divine Light, which ſhines in thy Mind, Heart and Conſcience (whether thou be Darkneſs or Light, a Believer or an Infidel) take a perfect View of thy ſelf, and thou mayeſt by the Light thereof infallibly perceive and know, Whether thou art

a Member of the  
 \* Holy iCatholick Church, or whether thou art of some private Opinion or Sect, which only calls it self so; and whether thy Mind, Heart and Conscience-are cleansed, and set at Liberty from all that did defile and imbondage them; or, whether thou art corrupted & defiled, captivated and bound under with the Chains of Darkness, Superstitious Education, Corrupt Tradition and Selfish Opinions, kindling thy Sacrifices with Coals from thy own Altar, and walking in the Light of thy own Sparks, by the *Eye* or

\* None can be of the holy Catholick Church further then they walk in the Light, learn of the Grace, and profit by the Manifestation of the Spirit of God, given to them, and is present with them, convincing, reprovng & judging all and every Appearance of Evil, and ready to teach & lead into all Good; and it is those only that are led and guided by the *spirit of God* that are his Sons & Daughters, and Members of the holy church, which is in God; he that can receive it, let him.

Light

Light of God, which runs to and fro through the Earth, and searcheth thy Heart, tryeth thy Reins and sheweth unto thee thy Thoughts, thou mayest see thy own state and condition, how thou standest in the Sight of the Lord: & if thy Mind be spiritual, thou hast Life & Peace; if thy Heart be pure, thou seeest the Lord; if thy Conscience be purged from dead works, thou art a Servant of the living God, and findest Acceptance with him, being alive to Righteousness, and dead to Sin: but if thou dost Evil, Sin lies at thy Door, and he that saves his People from their Sins thou art ignorant of, and Death, the Wages thereof, attends thee, profess what thou wilt, and let thy notion & opinion be what it will, let thy form and fashion of Worship and Religion be what it will, whether thou art a Jew, Mahometan, Papist or Protestant, this is the Word of Truth to thee, whether thou wilt hear or forbear, thou shalt find it sealed upon thee in the Day of the Lord.

W. S.

THE END.

